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# THE AMERICAN JOURNAL OF NURSING

VOL. III

OCTOBER, 1902

NO. I

## SOME REMINISCENCES OF STERNBERG HOSPITAL

By MRS. H. C. LOUNSBERY

Chief Nurse

It was the second day of an autumn storm. The rain was coming down with a steady persistence that forbade all thought of a "clearing up." All the night before, on our way south, we could hear the patter of the rain on car-window and roof whenever the train stopped at a station. On our arrival at the Chickamauga Station nothing but mud and water in dreary vistas saluted the eye. I felt very grateful to the representative of the Red Cross Society for bringing me to the hospital in the ambulance he had taken to the station for the Red Cross supplies, which came in by every train.

If the weather were depressing to the last degree, my welcome was warm and sunny enough to make up for it.

Miss Maxwell, who was then chief nurse, and who, with her devoted band of nurses, had organized the nursing part of Sternberg Hospital, came out in the rain to greet me and brought me into the "head-quarters," a rough, one-story frame house. Here I was shown my "apartment," a cot in one corner of a room perhaps twenty-five feet square. Miss Maxwell's own cot was in another corner and her assistant's in the third. The washstand and a screen occupied the fourth. A table was in the middle of the room. I was duly advised of the leaky places in the roof, and cautioned as to the inexpediency of allowing the water to flow unchecked down my back, but as no one seemed to mind any of these accidents, I speedily felt it became me to be likewise indifferent.

The easy nonchalance with which everyone accepted the utter discomfort caused by the rain filled me with admiration. Everyone's feet were soaking wet. Most of the nurses' skirts were wet around the hem. Never will I forget my first sight of Miss C., the representative

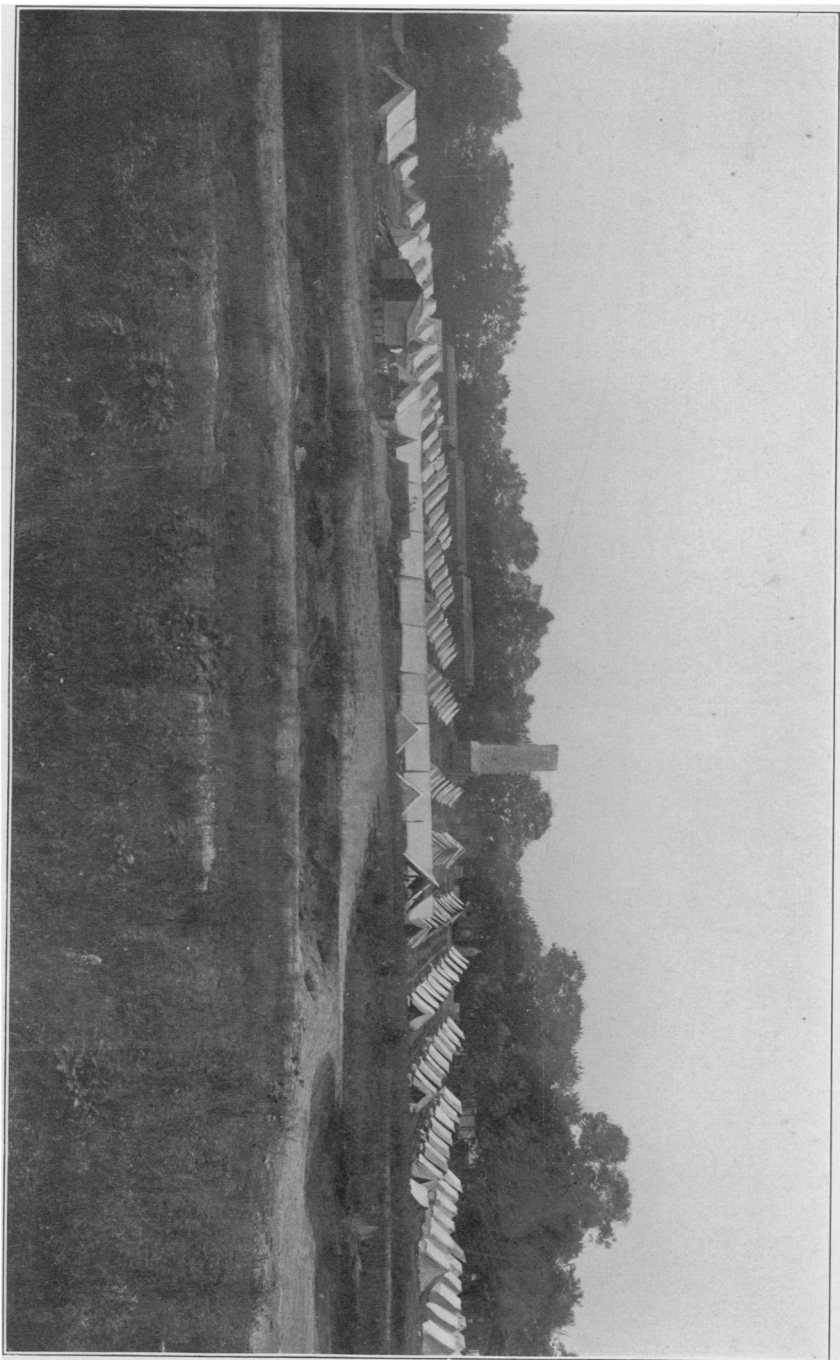
of Auxiliary No. 3 of the Red Cross. She was superintending some carpenters as they were building a separate pavilion for the forty night nurses. She had thrown a soldier's poncho over her shoulders, and all her clothes not covered by this were "wringing" wet; but not one bit did she seem to care; she looked as if she enjoyed it.

This rain lasted for the better part of two days and nights, and only those who were there can tell of the discomforts it brought: wet feet, wet skirts, no fire to dry anything by except the oil-stoves our food was cooked on. So in the morning there were wet shoes to be put on and wet skirts also, and the floor of our mess-tent was an inch deep in water as we went to breakfast. I did not go through the wards that day, so did not know until later how a rain-storm complicates matters in a tent hospital.

Sternberg Hospital was called into being on account of the inadequacy of the division hospitals to accommodate the great number of sick that came crowding to their wards when the epidemic of typhoid broke out late in the summer of 1898. It consisted partly of tents and partly of pavilions (rough board houses, each containing forty beds). The tents were put up in long lines, ten tents in a line, with a tent "fly" between each. These were arranged upon a gentle slope, so that each line of tents ran down-hill. A tent and a "fly" were on the same level, then a step down, and another tent and a fly. In each tent were four beds and nothing else but a table; and right here let me say that the beds were good iron beds, with woven-wire springs and good hair mattresses in three sections. The pillows were good feather pillows. Each bed had a T at each end to support a mosquito netting, which was furnished if desired. In the "fly" was everything necessary for nursing the patients. Linen-closets were improvised from wooden packing-boxes turned on their sides, and three or four on top of each other, with a cheese-cloth curtain in front, made a very respectable closet. We had similar closets for table-ware, and they answered the purpose very well and took up very little room. In the fly were also piles of blankets for cold nights, a refrigerator, and the necessary basins, glasses, and spoons, and the medicines arranged on a table; there was also the nurses' table, for charts, books, reports, etc.

The pavilions for the patients, which can be seen in View No. 1 as long, low sheds, were also on a hill-side, and were across the "street" and at right angles to the lines of tents. The tents were numbered, the first section beginning at No. 1, the second at 11, the third at 21, etc. The pavilions were lettered and were eight in number.

The tower which is the central object in the background of the view of the hospital is one of the monuments, of which there are very



NO. 1. BIRD'S-EYE VIEW OF STERNBERG HOSPITAL



No. 2. THE STERNBERG HOSPITAL—AT CLOSER RANGE

many in Chickamauga Park. This one was built by General Wilder's troops, as it was on this spot that they performed such valorous deeds in the battle of Chickamauga during the Civil War. At the foot of the lines of sections can be seen the line of tents which served as mess-hall for the Hospital Corps men. Away to the left foreground are the two laundry tents. At the extreme right lines of tents are seen with closed flaps; these sections were never used. At the head of these, dimly seen through the trees, are the nurses' pavilions. The Red Cross flag can be seen floating from our head-quarters. The low building in front of the monument is the bacteriologist's office; to the right is the operating-room, with rooms back for surgical patients; a little farther to the right is the commanding officer's quarters, and a short line of tents still farther to the right was occupied by the second officer in command and the quartermasters, commissaries, etc. View No. 2 shows the "street," the lines of tents running down-hill from it. View No. 3 shows the inside of a tent: the doctor, nurses, and the Hospital Corps men are in the "fly." No. 4\* shows a whole line of tents—a "section." All the tent-flaps had been drawn back for this view to be photographed. No. 5 shows the interior of a pavilion. No. 6 is the interior of a nurses' dormitory and shows their accommodations. There was a wash-room separate from the sleeping-apartment shown here, and later we had a bath-house with several rooms, each containing a bath-tub.

I am sorry that my photograph of our new "mess-hall," built for us by Auxiliary No. 3, has faded so that it is of no use. It was picturesquely built around a tree that happened to be in the way. It contained three long tables, where we were comfortably seated at meals, be the weather wet or dry. The tree-trunk was utilized as a post to hang lamps on, so we could have light at supper-time.

I would like to say here that we had two or three women as cooks and cleaners for the nurses' dormitories from Booker Washington's Tuskegee Institute. They were of the greatest assistance, being very intelligent, and in every way a credit to themselves and the institute. They were carefully watched over by Mrs. Washington, who wrote them frequently, exhorting them to propriety and industry.

Sternberg Hospital had been in existence three weeks when I arrived, and almost all the hardships were over. Miss Maxwell and her devoted corps of nurses had accomplished wonders in that time, working eighteen hours every day under the hot August sun. It is not to be marvelled at that such great exertions, coming, as they did, after her usual year of work in the Presbyterian Hospital in New York,

\* See November number.

should have overtaxed her strength, and she found she must go for a rest. I was sent down to take her place, and this is what I found: a chief nurse with her assistant, a night superintendent, nineteen head nurses, about one hundred ward nurses, and forty night nurses; the discipline as perfect and the work carried on as quietly and efficiently as if the hospital had been in existence three years instead of three weeks. No one will ever know how much exertion this cost except those who were there and planned, or assisted in planning and organizing the work.

Who will ever forget our inefficient and often-changed Hospital Corps men? These men were detailed each day from different regiments to come to the hospital and help with the nursing. Their principal duty was to wait on the men and to empty and cleanse the bed-pans and urinals, and to clean the wards, to fetch ice and milk, and otherwise assist. They were afraid to come, as unhandy about a sick-bed as the proverbial man, and, of course, knew not the first principles of cleaning a vessel properly. Later we had proper Hospital Corps men, who were not, however, perfect by any means; but these first experiments were trials indeed. How we struggled to get them, and after they came how we struggled to get them to do their work. One morning as I was making "rounds" I saw one of these "trials" pretending to mop the floor. He held the mop like a broom, and was gently swishing it about, while he was looking, in open-mouthed astonishment, at a nurse giving an ice-bath. I took the mop from him and gave him a practical demonstration then and there of the right way to mop, then I stood by while he worked, and I must give him the credit of saying that he profited greatly by his lesson.

Our day began with a six-thirty A.M. breakfast, and the nurses were in the wards at seven, and the night nurses were relieved; from then until the night nurses came on duty again the work was continuous. Sometimes the nurses had some "off duty," and many times they did not. This in a tent with the Georgia sun intensified by the glare of the white canvas roof was a terrible strain for anyone to bear. Later we had dark canvas put over the white, and it was the greatest relief to both patients and nurses.

Every day a big army-wagon drawn by four mules went down to the express office and came back piled high with boxes sent to the soldiers by the numerous sympathizing friends at home. Never shall I again see such a lavish outpouring of every imaginable comfort for the sick: hundreds of cases filled with all sorts of jellies in glass jars, cases of canned soups, cases of lime-juice and grape-juice, malted milk, fine wines and brandies, and all kinds of liquors, and as for clothing, cases



No. 3. THE STERNBERG HOSPITAL—INSIDE THE TENTS



and cases of night-shirts and pajamas. I remember particularly one box of night-shirts. Each shirt had in the customary pocket a handkerchief, in which was a piece of writing-paper rolled up like a quill and tied with thread, and on each of these pieces of paper was written a text from the Bible! In one box, among a mass of old-fashioned lint and old linen and home-made jellies and preserves, was a large bouquet of dried herbs. A paper tied to it said, "Good for inflammation;" this was written with the trembling hand of some dear old lady, and one could easily imagine with what loving anxiousness she had written out the virtues of the herbs she hoped would help some sufferer.

Time and memory fail me in the effort to recall all that was so lavishly outpoured. Our afternoons were generally spent opening these boxes and putting away their contents under lock and key, as so much of it was very valuable. Every morning the head nurses came and got what they needed for their patients for the day.

(To be continued.)

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## SPECIAL POINTS IN INFANT NURSING

By GRACE PECK HASKELL

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Too much stress cannot be laid on the importance of giving sick infants adequate nourishment. They *must* be fed, and fed regularly, with a sufficient quantity of easily digested food; but sick babies refuse frequently the breast or the bottle, and the only thing to be done is to resort to gavage, or forced feeding. With babies this is done in two ways,—through the mouth, or œsophageal feeding, and through the nose, or nasal feeding. Of these two, œsophageal is to be preferred, and this is done by inserting one end of a rubber tube through the mouth into the stomach, and pouring food through it by means of a funnel attached to the other end. The articles necessary in œsophageal feeding are one rubber tube, or catheter, about No. 10 size, one glass tube about four inches long, one piece of gum tubing about one foot long, and a glass funnel. These articles are to be boiled for at least ten minutes. Before boiling join them by putting the tube of gum rubber on the funnel, and this is joined to the catheter by means of the glass tube. The food for the baby is to be heated to the required temperature, and can as easily be poured from a bottle as from any other vessel.